



TCSA Formations

Formations

4 v 4 & 5 v 5 - U7 and U8 travel, U6 rec (no goalkeepers)

7 v 7 - U9 and U10 travel, U7 - U10 rec

9 v 9 - U11 and U12 travel, U12 rec

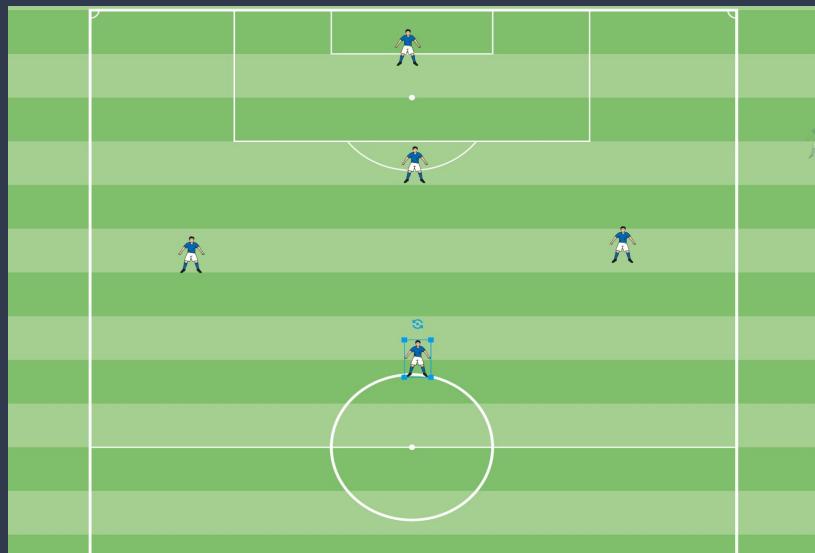
11 v 11 - U13 and up travel, U14 rec

Formation names are labeled from the back to the front without the goalkeeper:

EX: 2-3-1 (2 defenders, 3 midfielders and 1 forward)

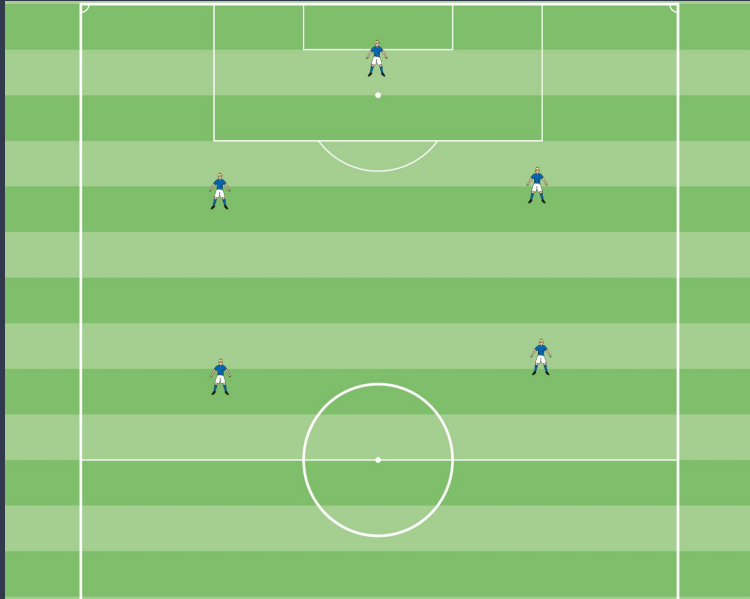


5 v 5 Diamond



- **Simple positions**
 - Back of the diamond
 - Right side/parent side of the diamond
 - Left side/coaches side of the diamond
 - Front of the diamond
- **Positives**
 - Natural triangle positions
 - 3 lines - transitions to defense, midfield and strikers
 - Provides width and depth
- **Negatives**
 - Can be hard for one to defend in the back
 - Midfield concept can be harder to grasp
 - Gap in the center might leave too much space

5 v 5 Box



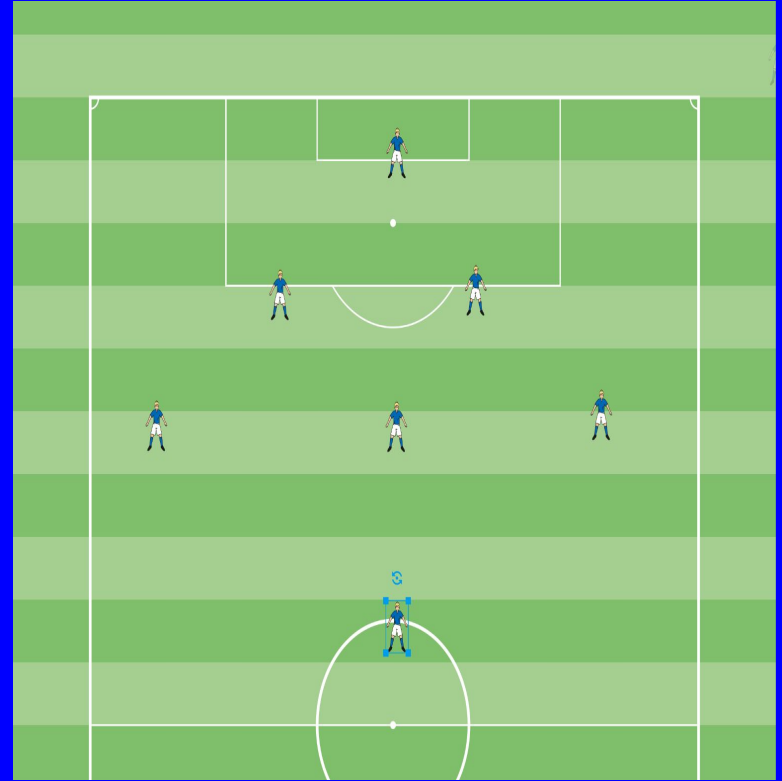
- **Simple Positions**
 - Two defenders
 - Two attackers
- **Positives**
 - Natural attacking and defending pairs
 - Simple directions - easy to understand
 - Defensive stability - 2 defenders gives numbers
- **Negatives**
 - Natural angles are not provided
 - Large gaps in the middle of the field

5 v 5 –

- Players should play all of the “positions” - development and learning how to play in all areas of the field are important - including goalkeeper
- Emphasis should be placed on finding space, moving off of the ball and supporting your teammates
- Encourage players to take players on 1 v 1 - mistakes are ok - that is how we learn
- The diamond formation is preferred - but if the box is needed to keep a team from struggling based on the score, that is ok
- Balance your line-ups - pair stronger players with weaker players to help them develop

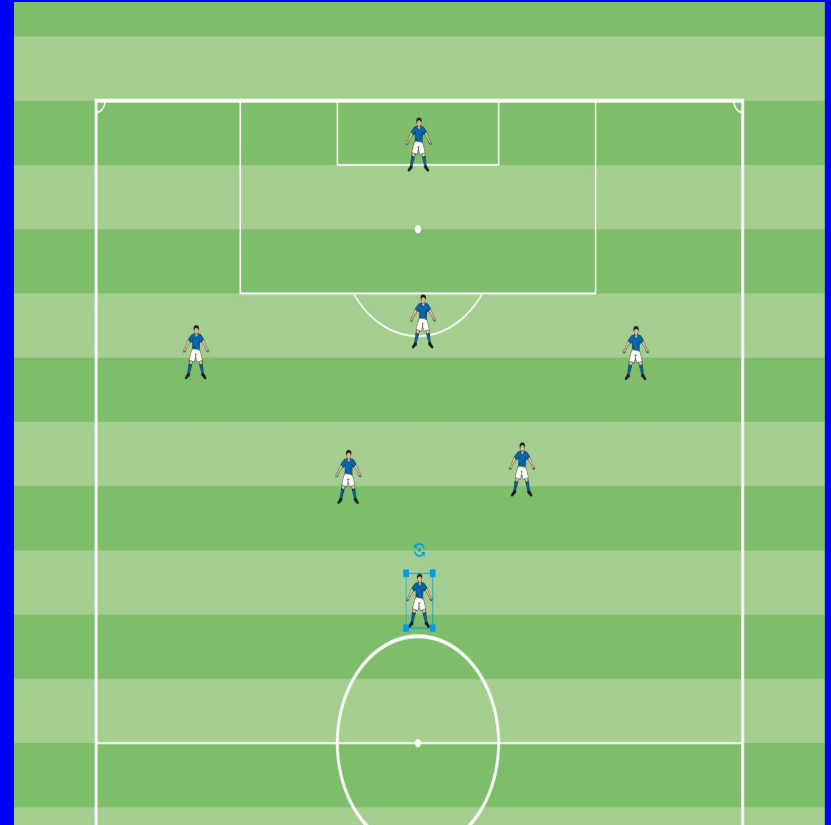
7 v 7 - 2-3-1

- Positives
 - Natural Pressure/Cover defensively
 - Numbers in the midfield - natural width
 - Good natural angles/triangles
- Negatives
 - Can leave defenders exposed
 - Lots of running for the wide players



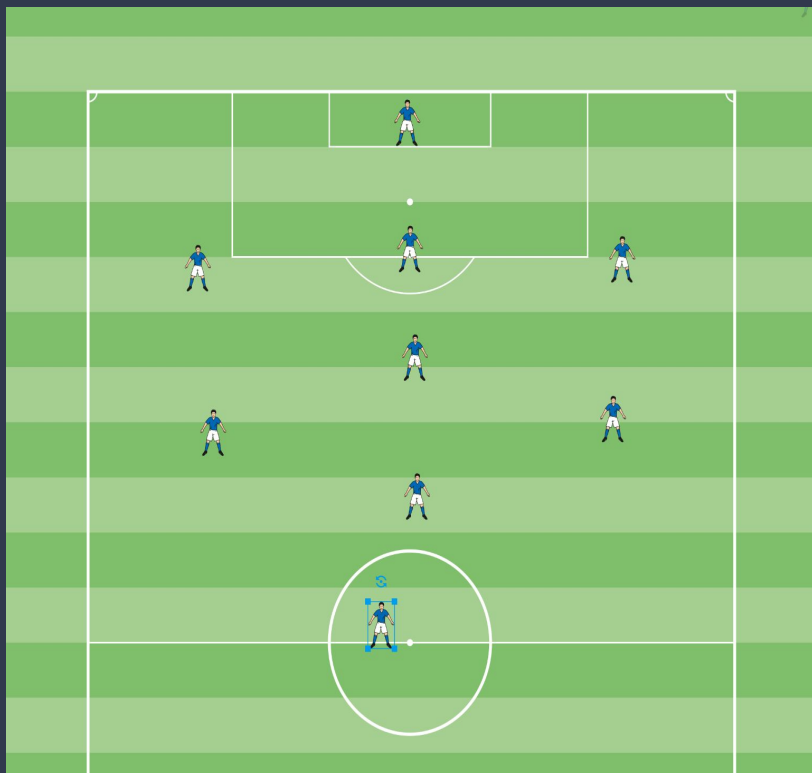
7 v 7 - 3-2-1

- Positives
 - Numbers in the back provide stability
 - Strong build up with numbers in the back
 - Protection from a counter attack if one defender goes forward
- Negatives
 - No natural width in front of defenders - players will have to make runs to create that space
 - Lack of attack with one striker and just two midfielders
 - Can struggle in the midfield if the opponent has 3 mids



7 v 7 -

- Players should still be exposed to all positions but you will start seeing natural tendencies
- Most skillful players will typically play in the midfield or defense
- Try to pair a slower player with a faster player if playing with 2 defenders
- Outside midfielders need to have good speed and stamina to work up and down the side of the field and help attack and defend
- Encourage players to try different positions
- Have players scrimmage without giving them positions and see what they gravitate towards



9 v 9 - 3-4-1

- Positives
 - Diamond and triangles in the midfield
 - Numbers up in the midfield
 - 3 defenders control the back and provide stability
 - Four midfielders provides numbers in attack
- Negatives
 - It can be difficult to create chances to score with one isolated striker
 - High physical demand on the outside mids to get up and down the field
 - Central midfielders have to stay together to keep from having gaps in the midfield to play through.

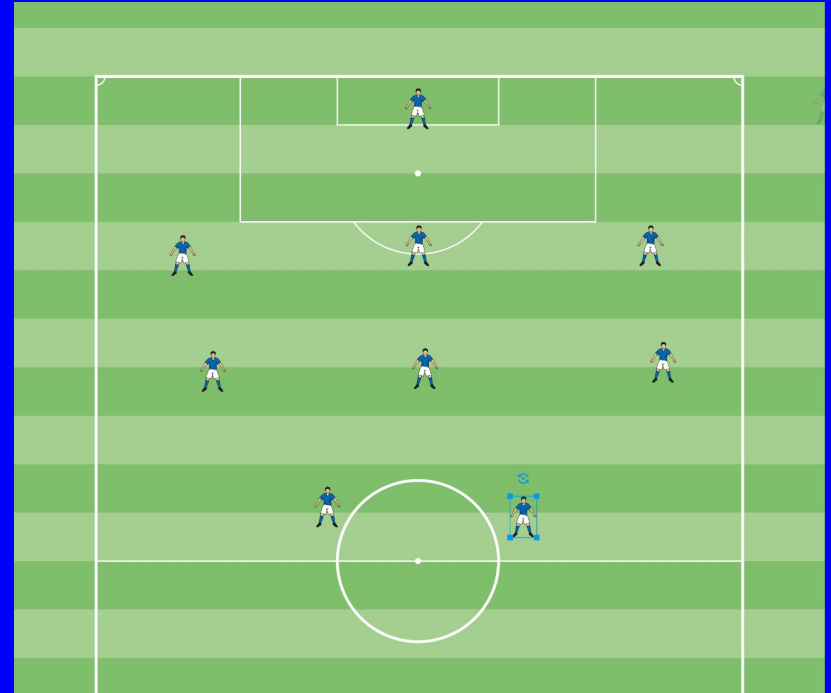
9 v 9 – 3-3-2

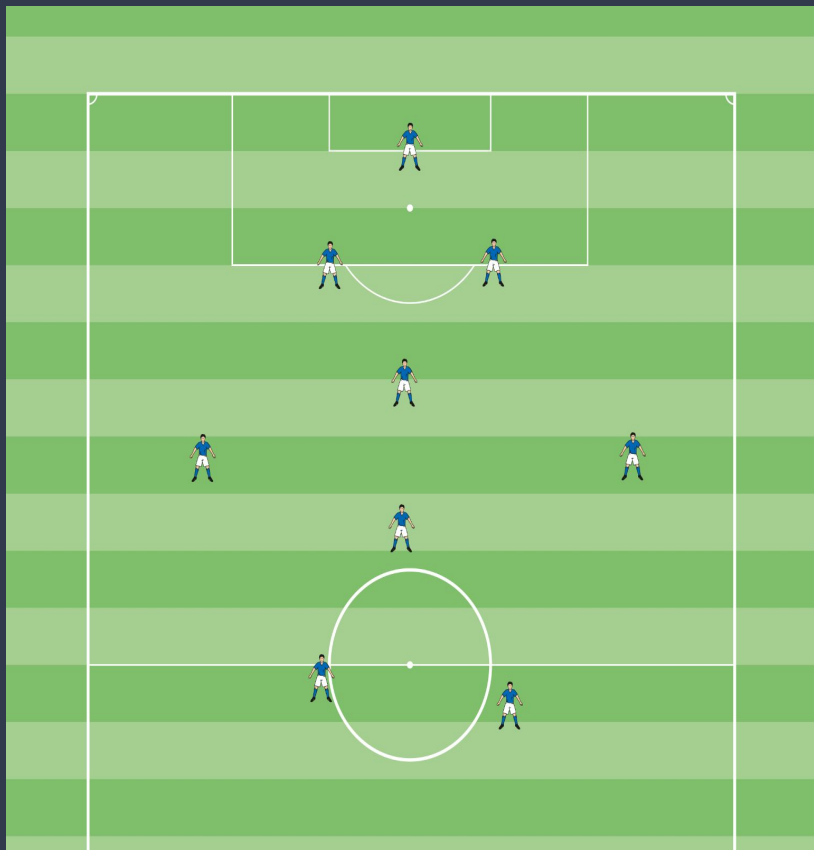
- Positives

- Strong defensive structure – 3 defenders and 3 midfielders
- Attack in tandem. 2 strikers make it easier to create opportunities.
- 3 midfielders can help control the middle of the field
- Simple structure – easy to understand

- Negatives

- High physical demand on the midfielders
- Vulnerability on the flanks with three midfielders and three backs



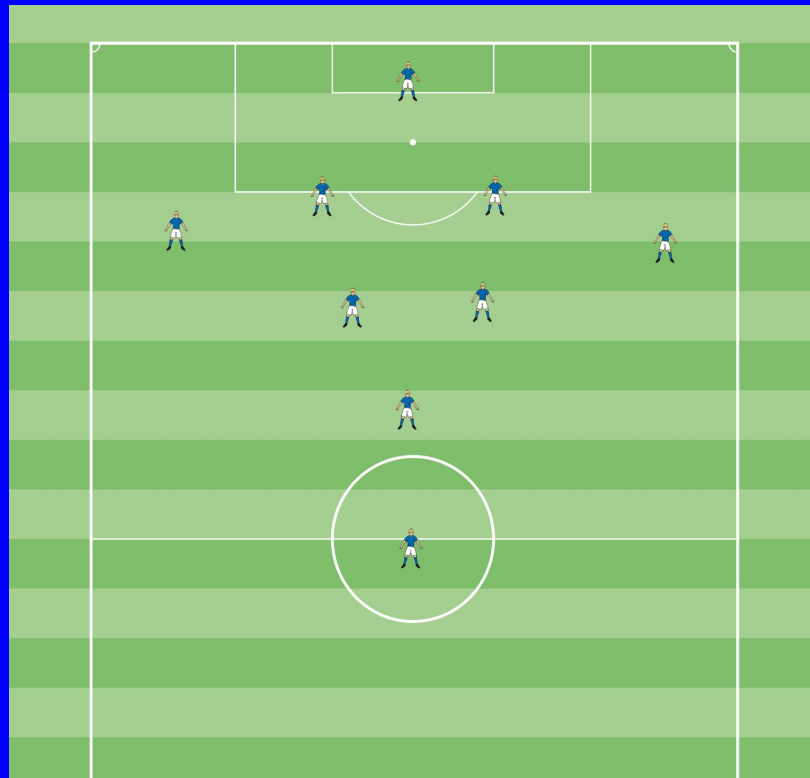


9 v 9 - 2-4-2

- **Positives**
 - Four midfielders should establish dominance in the middle of the field
 - Natural width and balance
 - Players up the field allow for a high press
 - Players have natural pairings on the field
- **Negatives**
 - Vulnerability in the back with 2 defenders
 - Extreme physical demands on the outside midfielders
 - Susceptible to long balls played into corners

9 v 9 – 4-3-1

- Positives
 - Strong defensive structure – translates well to teaching 4 backs in 11 v 11
 - 3 central midfielders allows for numbers and control in the midfield
 - Allows the team to play and advance as a compact unit
- Negatives
 - A lone striker makes attacking and creating opportunities more difficult
 - Must get width from the outside back – 4 attackers are more central
 - Outside backs must attack – makes teams vulnerable to the counter attack



9 v 9

- This the first level where there is a wide variety of formations and you can really start making formation decisions based on the strengths and weaknesses of your team.
- Examples: If you have two very strong defenders and two very energetic wingers, you can play a 2-4-2. But it won't work if you don't. Only play one striker if you either have someone who can create opportunities alone, or is very good at holding the ball and waiting for teammates to get forward with them. If you have a lot of technical creative midfielders, you can play with 3 midfielders in the middle of the field and try to possess the ball.
- The score and situation of the game can and will impact which formation you play - as long as you have players that can adjust mid-game.
- U11 and U12 players start to "specialize" in positions - analyze players strengths and weaknesses to put them in situations where they can succeed as individuals and help their team.
- Wingers should be fast and have good endurance.
- Midfielders should have good vision and technical ability.
- Strikers should be good 1 v 1, or have good ability to hold the ball with their back to goal.
- Defenders should be good at winning the ball and calm with the ball at their feet.

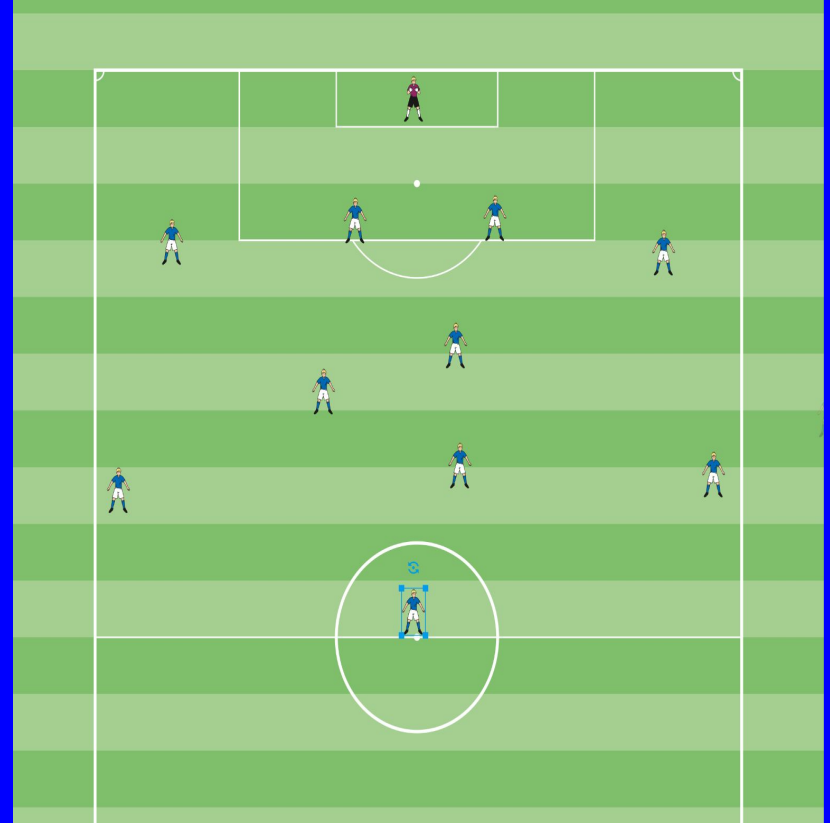
11 v 11 – 4-3-3

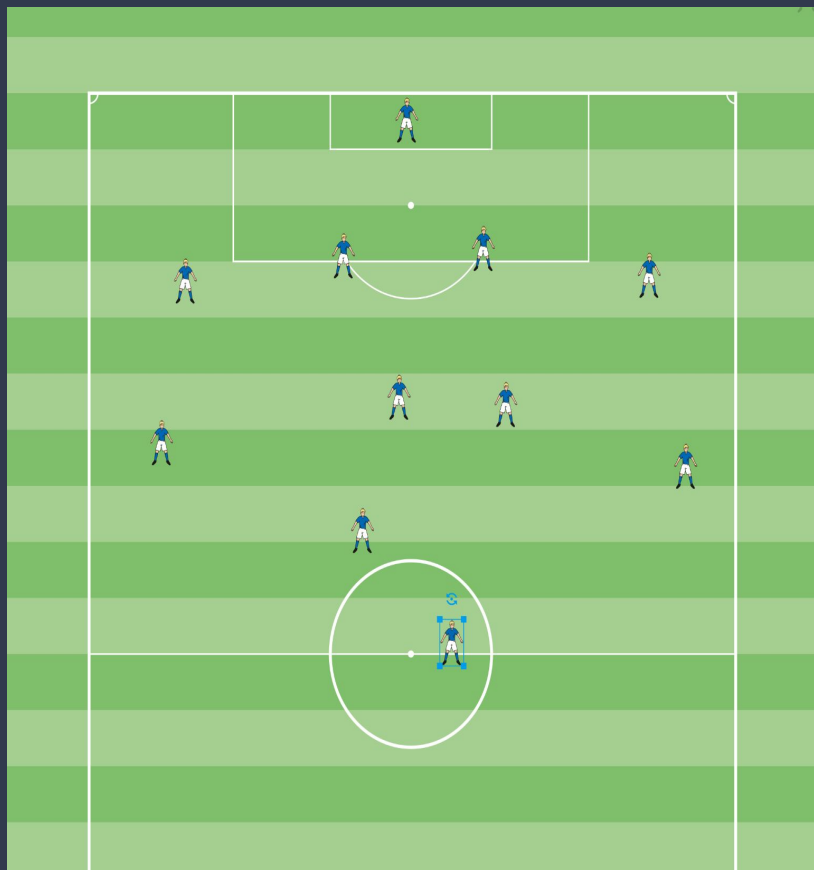
- Positives

- Natural passing angles and triangles
- Front 3 provides numbers to press high
- Wingers help spread the defense and attack down the flanks
- Options in the midfield triangle

- Negatives

- Midfielders and defenders must have good stamina – cover a lot of ground
- Risk of numbers down in the midfield if the opponent has 4 or 5 mids
- High reliance on the front 3 being able to win the ball high and create chances – makes the team vulnerable to a counter attack





11 v 11 - Traditional 4-4-2

- **Positives**
 - Two lines of four provides defensive compactness
 - Simple structure - easy to understand
 - Two strikers allows them to play off of each other
 - Natural wide midfielders allows for counters
- **Negatives**
 - Only two central midfielders can cause trouble winning the midfield
 - Can be big gaps between midfield line and strikers
 - Wide midfielders must be fit to get up and down the field
 - Formation lends itself to more direct play vs. possession in the midfield

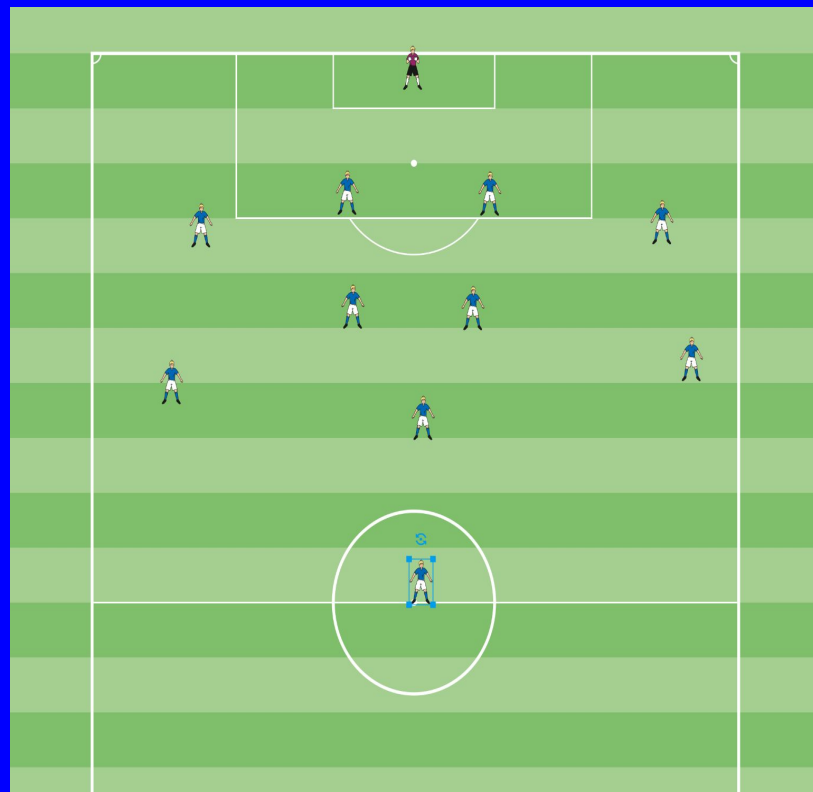
11 v 11 – 4-2-3-1

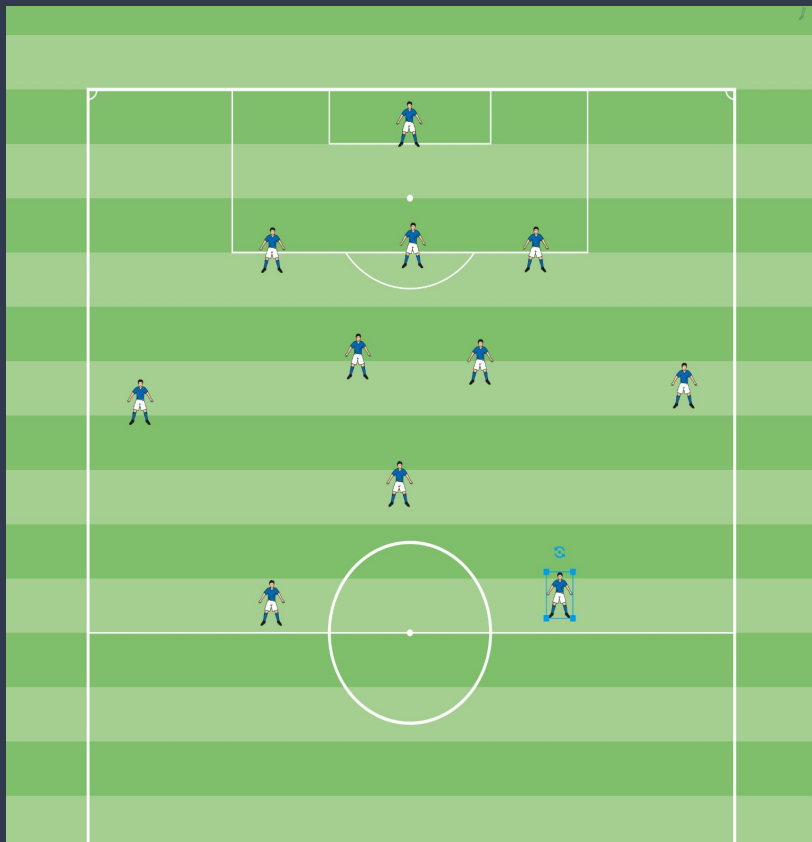
- Positives

- Defensive stability with a double pivot
- Numbers in the midfield help retain possession
- The CAM – #10 – has the ability to roam and link players
- Wingers provide width and can attack space up the flank

- Negatives

- Isolated striker can make it difficult to attack
- Heavy workload on the midfielders – must be fit
- The midfield can get congested
Players must learn to work off of each other to open up and create space



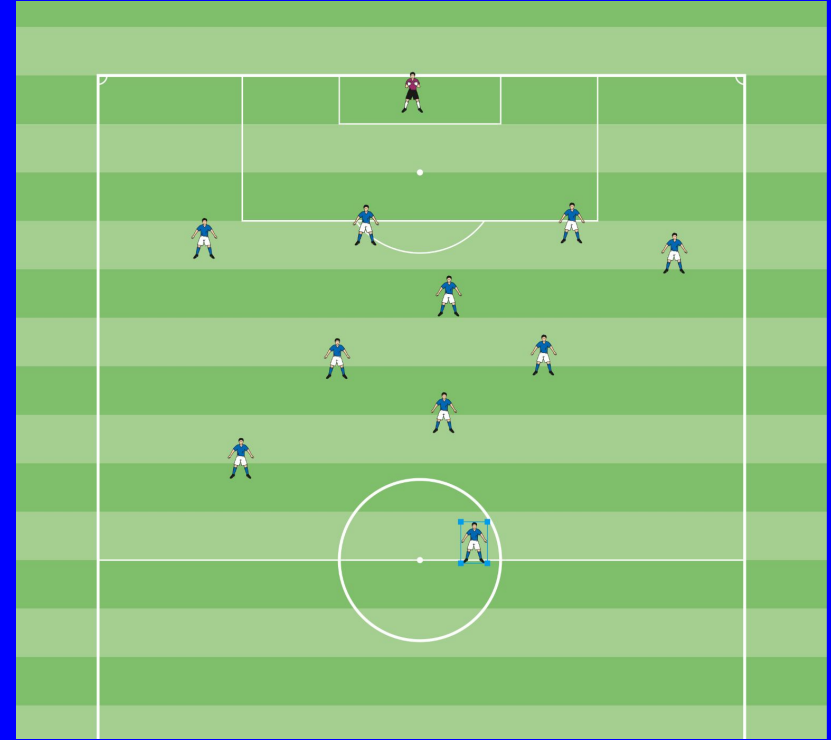


11 v 11 - 3-5-2

- Positives
 - Five players in the midfield should allow for possession
 - Two strikers should be marked by the defense to allow wingbacks to attack the flanks and create overloads
 - Three center backs provide strength in the middle of the field - naturally falling into five backs when the wingbacks drop out of possession
- Negatives
 - No outside backs leave you vulnerable on the flanks
 - Wingbacks have an exhausting workload
 - Centerbacks have a lot of space to cover
 - Have to have the right personnel

11 v 11 – 4-Diamond-2

- Positives
 - Numbers in the midfield provide superior possession opportunities
 - Staggered player lines allows for vertical passing ability out of the back
 - Two striker tandem allows for higher pressing and numbers in the attack
- Negatives
 - Vulnerability out wide with no wide midfielders
 - High physical demands on outside backs and dual 8's
 - Players must move and work as a unit or they will become disconnected



11 v 11

- Tactics fully come into play on the full size field. Tactics become increasingly important with age.
- Centerbacks need to communicate well, be good at winning the ball, and have composure under pressure.
- Outside backs need to be good at 1 v 1 defending and separating players from the ball.
- Central midfielders need to be good in possession and have good vision. They also need to be comfortable with things going on all around them.
- Wingers and wingbacks have to have good speed and be fit to get up and down the field. They are crucial to helping the attack, but also creating good balance in defense.
- Strikers need to be willing to do a lot of hard work off of the ball. They also need to know when to slow things down to let their teammates get forward, and when to attack when the defense is unorganized or out of balance.

If you have questions
about how formations
fit with your team –
ask! anne@tcsa.net